



STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

Thursday, April 6th 2006

RESULTS

Thursday, April 6th, 2006: 1:30 to 4:00 p.m.
Missoula County Courthouse, Room #201 - Missoula

Purpose of the meeting:

- *To review preliminary existing conditions*
- *To review identified issues and develop draft corridor goals*

I. Invited Stakeholder Attendance

- Gordon Reese, Friends of the Bitterroot Trail
- Cheryl Russell, U of M (for Ken Willett)
- Barbara Evans, Missoula Co. Commissioner
- Jean Belangie-Nye, Lolo Community
- Mike Kress, Missoula Office of Planning and Grants
- Greg Robertson, Missoula Co. Public Works
- Phil Smith, City of Missoula Bike/Ped
- Elloie Jeter, Florence Community
- Shame Grimes, Montana Highway Patrol
- John C. McGee, Florence-Carlton School District
- Charlie Wright, Montana Department of Commerce
- Bob Giordono, MIST

Other Stakeholder Attendance

- Glen Bumgardner, Corridor resident
- David G. Jefle, Missoula Power Equipment – Corridor business owner
- Richard Ochsnol, Missoula Mercantile and Pawn - Corridor business owner
- Wally Sept, Corridor resident

Montana Department of Transportation / Federal Highway Administration

- Dwane Kailey, MDT District Engineer
- Shane Stack, MDT District
- Lynn Zanto, MDT Planning
- Sheila Ludlow, MDT Project Manager
- Bob Burkhardt, FHWA

Consultant Team

- Don Galligan, HDR Project Manager
- Mike Pepper, KMP Planning

II. Brief review of the planning area and process

- Don presented an overview of the project background and development, including the corridor planning area, corridor plan process and schedule

- Mike presented the highlights of the public involvement process, including how the activities integrate into the planning process and roles for the Advisory Committee, Stakeholders, and Partners, Public, MDT and the consultant team.
- Primary goal of the process: *To identify the necessary improvements to meet the needs of the corridor and users for the next 20 years*

III. Overview of existing conditions

- Preliminary system conditions info – Don presented an overview of the existing corridor conditions, including the new resource information, shown on maps

IV. Present identified corridor Issues

- Mike presented highlights of corridor issues from public input, advisory committee and stakeholder interviews
- Additional issues identified by Stakeholders
 - Long Ave. / US 93 intersection
 - Safety at school access – congested – school access for pedestrians and vehicles; increasing number of students in the next 3 to 5 years
 - Include new development on East Side Highway in planning for the corridor
- Additional stakeholder general comments
 - Van-pool service from Hamilton to Missoula – contact Bitterroot Bus for status
 - MountainLine Bus is just beginning bus service this week on a trial basis from Missoula to Lolo – maintain contact with Mountain Line to learn of rider numbers
 - Need updated Ravalli County subdivision information
 - Adjust the suggested amount of developable land shown, by removing the flood plain lands from the shown amount of available developable lands

V. Identify desired future corridor condition

- Prioritize issues – Stakeholders were given 10 dots each to place on their top 10 issues, from the list of issues presented by the consultant team in Step IV. The results are shown below in order of priority, including the number of dots received.

SAFETY

- 6 - Lack of, or limited emergency vehicle access to US 93 when blocked
- 3 - Lack of adequate left turn protection
- 2 - Traffic speeds seem too high
- 1 - Vehicle / pedestrian conflicts
- 1 - Excessive speeds at entrance to Florence conflict with pedestrian activities
- Unsafe / illegal parking
- Conflicting and improper center lane movements

CORRIDOR DESIGN

- 6 - Insufficient shoulder / bike lane width
- 2 - Drainage / flooding / ice across highway at MP 86.2 (curve)
- 1 - Lack of separation between north and southbound lanes
- 2 - Insufficient shoulder width for right turn movements
- 2 - Difficulty of visibility of pavement markings during rain
- 1 - Lack of real-time roadway information for travelers
- 1 - Right turn lane from East Side Highway onto US 93 northbound is too short
- Dip on Blue Mtn. Rd. at approach to US 93
- Sight distance limitation at Trader Bros. intersection

- Bottleneck between Lolo and Missoula
- Right turn radius is too tight for southbound truck turns onto Mormon Crk Rd.
- Southbound left turn bay on US 93 to East Side Highway is too short

MULTI-MODAL

- 8 - Desire availability of alternative transportation modes along US 93
- 7 - Desire for separated bike / ped pathway between Lolo and Missoula
- 6 - Unsafe conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians along US 93 through Lolo continuing to Missoula
- 3 - Desire to meet travel demand
- 2 - Lack of sufficient multi-modal connections in Missoula
- 2 - Substandard rail bed and crossing conditions for possible passenger rail use
- 2 - Van pool schedules do not meet user needs
- Insufficient number / poorly lit Park and Ride lots
- Desire to increase the percentage of travelers using alternative modes; biking, walking, transit

CAPACITY / LEVEL OF SERVICE (Congestion)

- 4 - Insufficient capacity to meet traffic volume needs and maintain acceptable level of service
- 3 - Backup on US 93 between Lolo and Missoula when closed due to emergencies
- 2 - Lack of traffic breaks during peak traffic
- 2 - Congestion at Blue Mountain Rd. westbound from US 93
- 1 - Congestion during peak traffic hours
- Traffic stacking is increasing along corridor
- Increased conflicts with commercial traffic

ACCESS

- 8 - Insufficient coordination with land use planning process
- 5 - Desire to maintain access control
- 2 - Residential development creates increased demand for access to US 93
- 1 - Conflicting turning movements at Lolo School
- 1 - Long delays accessing US 93 during peak times
- Too many / close access points

ENVIRONMENTAL

- 3 - US 93 impacts to wetlands; bisect and drainage
- 2 - Corridor noise through Lolo and Florence
- 2 - Deer crossing and congestion near Buckhouse Bridge
- 2 - Reduced air quality due to traffic volumes and congestion
- 2 - Air pollution and impacts to bike and ped use from roadway dirt and wintertime sanding
- 1 - Excessive noise from rumble strips
- Risks due to use of US 93 as hazardous material route
- Poor aesthetics at southern gateway to Missoula
- Aging population needs for emergency services and mobility

- Identify corridor users – the Stakeholder’s identified the following list of corridor users as an aid in understanding the needs of the corridor and its users and background for goal development

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commuters ○ Commercial trucks / oversized loads ○ Senior age drivers ○ Consumers - Anyone buying goods and services, including medical services ○ Tourists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Loggers ○ School busses ○ Farm equipment ○ Recreationists – all modes; bike, ped, fisherman, RV’s, skiers, river users ○ Inexperienced teen age drivers
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- Emergency services
 - Wildlife
 - Local / social travel
 - Agricultural use
 - Event travelers
 - US 93 Through-travelers
 - Motorcycles
 - Commuter bicyclists
 - Racing bicyclists
 - Pedestrians
 - Busses/vans
 - Construction workers
 - Trains
- **Brainstorm desired corridor qualities** – the Stakeholder’s identified the following list of desired corridor qualities, as an aid in determining and refining corridor goals
 - Safe for bike and pedestrian use – separate where needed
 - Safe pedestrian crossings; at school crossings, intersections, playgrounds, schools
 - Aesthetically pleasing – allow views from the roadway
 - Environmentally sound; low/no impacts from highway
 - Low congestion
 - Continuous safe flow of traffic; not just fastest pace
 - Feasible use of mass transit; account for reducing available resources, fuel, etc.
 - Affordable
 - Flexible, with diverse options
 - Communities protected from adverse impacts from the highway

VI. Develop draft goals

- Mike presented a set of draft goals for the Stakeholder’s consideration. The draft goals were developed based on issues identified through stakeholder interviews, public workshops and input from the “Issue prioritization” process in Step V.
- Draft Goals – the Stakeholders refined the draft goals presented as follows:
 - **Safety** - Provide and maintain a safe transportation corridor for all modes of travel
 - *Assumed to include the entire year, day and night time travel, with safe crossings*
 - *Suggest reviewing the accident data and locations for the past 10 years*
 - **Environment** – Minimize through “best practices”, the negative corridor impacts to the adjacent environment, communities and wildlife
 - *Provide wildlife crossings as needed; under, over, fences, etc.*
 - **Financial** - Ensure the wise use of financial resources
 - *identify new resources where possible*
 - *identify inexpensive project alternatives that can be completed “now”*
 - **Multi-modal** – Optimize the use of alternative transportation modes throughout the corridor
 - **Transportation Corridor Design** – Implement safe “context-sensitive” design solutions that balance corridor functional needs with community and environmental character of the corridor
 - *This applies to both operation and construction*
 - **Congestion** – Maintain acceptable levels of safe corridor operation

- **Access** – Manage corridor access within the law to balance user access demands with corridor operational needs
 - *See Hamilton to Lolo EIS, Lolo to Missoula Access Control Study and Miller Creek EIS*

VII. Next Steps / adjourn by 4:00 p.m.

- Present draft corridor goals to Advisory Committee for review and discussion
- Further refinement of corridor goals as needed for consideration by MDT
- Identify possible alternatives
- Next public workshop #2 – May / June 2006 – date to be announced